

The physicians in Los Angeles are very busily at work in preparation for the meeting of the American Medical Association which is to be held in that city during the last week of June, 1911. From present indications the meeting will be in every way a very successful one though, of course, the attendance will not be so large as it would be in Chicago or Atlantic City. There is a curiously strong prejudice inherent in the mind of the easterner, against travel. A New Yorker seems to regard a trip to Chicago as close to an upheaval of nature, and he talks about "going out West" if he moves as far from Manhattan as St. Louis or Minneapolis! But in spite of that fact, a good many of them are coming to Los Angeles.

The committee on scientific program for the state meeting at Santa Barbara is arranging a program which it trusts will meet with the cordial approval and support of the profession of the entire state. It has seemed to the committee that a fewer number of papers and more time allowed for the discussion of them and for recreation, would appeal to all. With forty or forty-five papers the session could be made of the very best scientific value and much fatigue which results from a crowded program be avoided. Symposiums on surgery, medicine, obstetrics and neurology will be features of the program together with sections on Eye and Ear and Nose and Throat and on Genito-Urinary and skin diseases. There will, of course, be room for miscellaneous papers. The committee hopes to interest members outside the cities in a liberal contribution to the session's work.

ATROPHY OF TONGUE AND SYPHILIS.

The recent paper of Symmers' (*Amer. Jour. Med. Sciences*, Dec., 1910) on The Incidence and Significance of Smooth Atrophy of the Base of the Tongue has again directed attention to the observation made by Virchow many years ago that syphilis is often associated with lesions at the root of the tongue characterized by obliteration of the normal surface markings and by unusual smoothness and induration of the tissues in that vicinity. While the occurrence of these changes has been frequently alluded to, it remains a fact that no important and systematic investigation of the subject was undertaken until 1894, when Lewin and Heller published the results of their observations which confirmed the belief of Virchow that a causal relation existed between smooth atrophy of the base of the tongue and syphilis.

These investigators in studying 103 subjects with the lesions described found that 69% had anatomical evidences of syphilis. The majority (62%) were over forty years of age and the lesion was noted more frequently in women than in men. They could trace no relationship between hereditary syphilis and the lingual atrophy. In fact they advanced the view that the atrophy was the result

of an interstitial fibrosis following ulcerating gummata, and that therefore the lesion is practically always a late sequence of acquired syphilis. Lesser studied 166 cases but found gross evidences of lues in 44% only, and disagrees with Lewin and Heller with regard to the relation of the lesion to ulcerating gummata, believing that the indurative process is the result of a chronic interstitial inflammation involving to a greater or less extent all of the tissues at the base of the tongue. On the other hand, Skladney states that he noted the lingual lesion in 20 out of 24 cases of late hereditary syphilis, an experience which is quite contrary to that of Seifert, who was unable to determine any lesion of the character under discussion in any of 26 cases of late hereditary syphilis which he studied.

In this country Potter, with the exception of Symmers, appears to have been the only one to attempt to determine the clinical value of smooth atrophy of the tongue. He examined the tongue in nearly 400 individuals and arrived at the conclusion that when the root of the tongue is normal it is probably of considerable value in excluding syphilis. Symmers in looking over 75 cases of undoubted late syphilis found the lingual lesion in 85%. From his observations upon the subject he draws the conclusion that genuine indurative atrophy of the base of the tongue is invariably the result of syphilis; but he does not find any histological evidence to support the view of Lewin and Heller that the condition has its origin in broken-down gummata, in this respect agreeing with Lesser.

THE GASTRO-INTESTINAL TRACT AS AN ORGAN OF EXCRETION.

The role of the wall of the gastro-intestinal tract in the excretion of foreign substances from the blood has long been surmised, but it is only within the last few years that the subject has been investigated to any extent. The results of these investigations have been most interesting and appear to justify further experimental studies. One of the earliest proofs of the passage of alien substances from the systemic blood into the gastro-intestinal tract consisted in the injection of antimony subcutaneously and demonstrating its presence a short time later in the stomach. Morphin, atropin, strychnin, and snake-venom have also been known to find their way into the stomach or intestine. More recently Mendel has shown that strontium is excreted by the intestine, and Good, Harnack, and Steinfeld have demonstrated the same thing for lithium, manganese and bismuth.

To what extent micro-organisms are excreted by the walls of the gastro-intestinal tract has been less satisfactorily shown. Years ago Emmerich stated that the organism of cholera could be recovered from the intestine several hours after subcutaneous or intravenous injection, and he expressed the view

that the organisms were excreted by the intestinal wall. Although the experiments were by no means conclusive, Buchner supported the views of Emmerich. More recently the subject of excretion of bacteria by the stomach and intestine has been investigated by Hess (*The Archives of Internal Medicine*, November 15, 1910). Without going into the details of the experiments it may be stated that this observer shows that at least the bacillus prodigiosus may pass directly from the blood through the intestinal wall. This was found to take place in one hour when one platinum loop of culture was inoculated. In these experiments all other paths of access from the blood to the lumen of the intestine were excluded.

Whether or not the same thing holds good for the human subject cannot of course be stated, but as Hess says, it is interesting to consider whether the analogy is applicable, whether the wall of the intestine functionates as an excretory organ not only in toxic conditions such as uremia, but also in bacteremias such as typhoid fever, or sepsis, and whether some of the intestinal symptoms and lesions, manifesting themselves in these states, are brought about by what may be termed a mural excretion. The whole question opens up an interesting field of speculation for the clinician, and offers alluring material for physiologist and pathologist alike.

COUNCIL MEETING.

The fifty-third meeting of the Council of the Medical Society of the State of California was held at noon on the 15th of December, 1910. There were present Drs. Kenyon, Aiken, Mays, Ewer, Ryfkogel, Grosse, Edwards, Parkinson and Jones.

The Secretary presented a statement of the financial condition of the Society, showing that there was more than sufficient cash on hand to pay all current bills and take up all outstanding notes, leaving a balance in the treasury. It was then moved, seconded and carried, that the Secretary be instructed to take up all outstanding notes of the Society (\$500.00).

The assessment for 1911 was fixed at \$3.00 per member and the subscription price to the JOURNAL was changed to \$1.00 and subscription made optional.

The Council extended a vote of thanks to Senators Estudillo, Roseberry and Holohan for their efforts to protect the public health of the people of California during the last Legislature.

The Secretary presented a report on the 22nd edition of Register and Directory, showing that the book had been issued with a profit to the Society of approximately \$200.00.

A number of matters connected with the general work and condition of the Society were discussed, particularly the very successful way in which the Medical Defense feature has operated, but no motions were made and no action taken.

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

FUNCTIONAL PERIODICITY IN WOMEN AND SOME OF THE MODIFYING FACTORS.

(Second Note.)

By CLELIA DUEL MOSHER, A. M., M. D., Palo Alto.

The subject of normal menstruation in women was discussed by the writer in a preliminary note published in 1901 in Vol. XII of the *Bulletin of the Johns Hopkins Hospital*.¹ As it now seems desirable to formulate some further conclusions arising from the immense mass of material which has been accumulating since 1893, and the correlation of which is still in progress, it becomes necessary to describe briefly the character of the information. The conclusions stated in the preliminary note as well as in this present one are based on two kinds of data—clinical and experimental. The first group consists of serial menstrual records of 400 women, collectively extending over more than 3350 menstrual periods. A large number of these records were made by the writer, month by month, when the women were under her personal observation from 1893 to 1896, and were then continued by the women themselves during the holidays and vacations. The records were supplemented by preliminary statements, careful intermenstrual notes, and subsequent letters. To this was added an intimate knowledge of the conditions under which the women were living and working. The second or experimental group comprises data on the respiration² and the blood, such as blood pressure, blood counts, hemoglobin, estimations and so on. A considerable amount of experimental work on the effect of clothing was also included.

The clinical records were begun 17 years ago, and the experimental work has been carried on as opportunity permitted in Dr. Kelly's laboratory at Baltimore; in the laboratories of Johns Hopkins and the Leland Stanford Junior Universities; and is still in progress.

The argument on which this study is based may be briefly stated as follows: Menstruation is apparently a more or less serious disability in a large number of women. One writer has described it as "a constantly recurring infirmity that occupies seven years out of thirty of a woman's adult life." It can be of no advantage to the race to have one-half of it incapacitated one week out of four. Unquestionably, therefore, relief from whatever incapacity may be associated with this physiological function is important, not only to woman as an individual, but to her as the mother of the race.

The following questions therefore arise: